FIRST ISSUE! START COLLECTING NOW!
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DENTON
EDDIE
"K.P."
BRENDA
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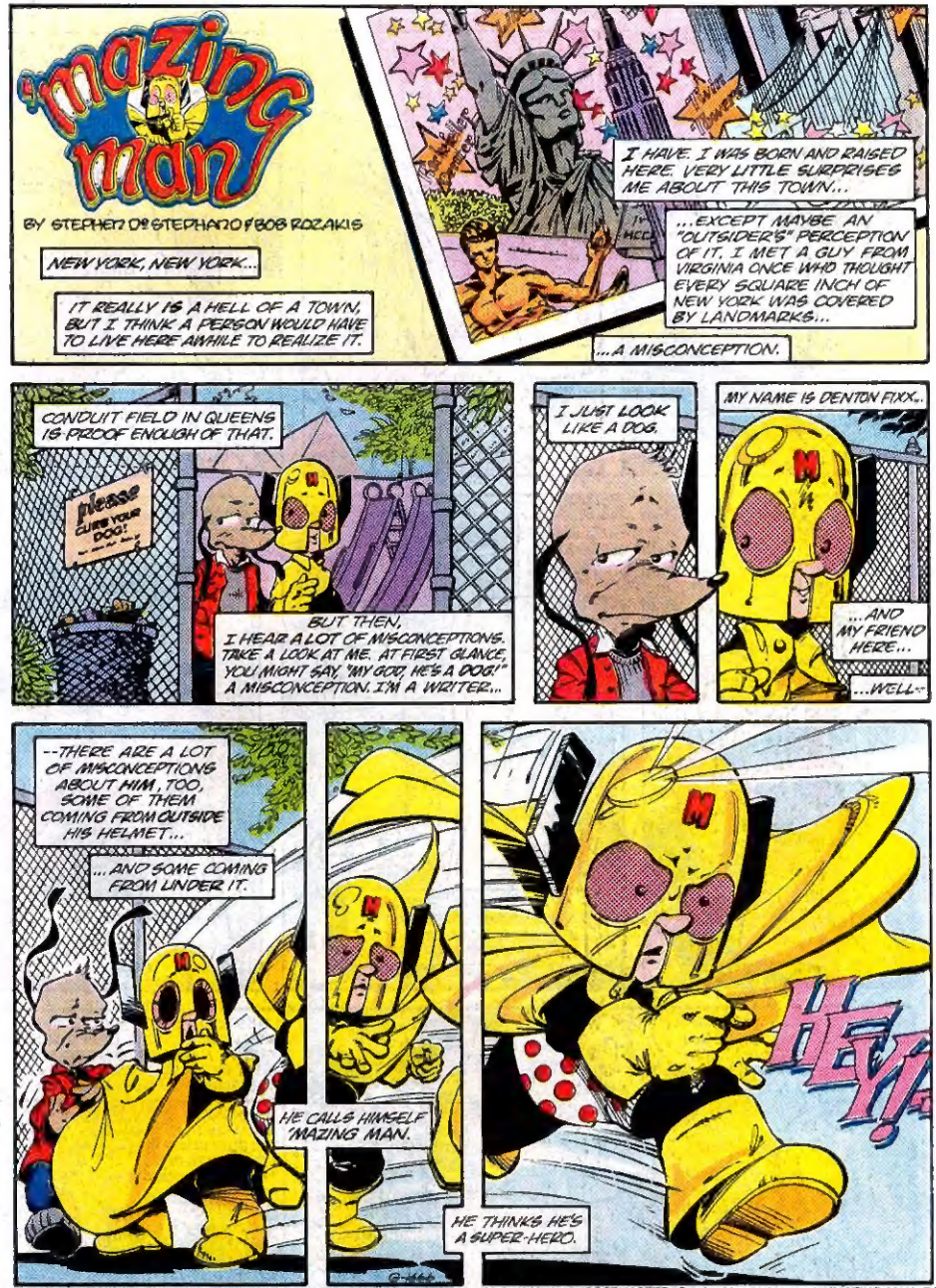
& KESEL


'mazing man
BY STEPHEN DeSTEFANO & BOB ROZAKIS
NEW YORK, NEW YORK...
IT REALLY IS A HELL OF A TOWN, BUT I THINK A PERSON WOULD HAVE TO LIVE HERE AWHILE TO REALIZE IT.
I HAVE. I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE. VERY LITTLE SURPRISES ME ABOUT THIS TOWN...
...EXCEPT MAYBE AN "OUTSIDER'S" PERCEPTION OF IT. I MET A GUY FROM VIRGINIA ONCE WHO THOUGHT EVERY SQUARE INCH OF NEW YORK WAS COVERED BY LANDMARKS...
...A MISCONCEPTION.
CONDUIT FIELD IN QUEENS IS PROOF ENOUGH OF THAT.
please CLEAN YOUR DOG!
BUT THEN, I HEAR A LOT OF MISCONCEPTIONS. TAKE A LOOK AT ME. AT FIRST GLANCE, YOU MIGHT SAY, "MY GOD, HE'S A DOG!" A MISCONCEPTION. I'M A WRITER...
I JUST LOOK LIKE A DOG.
MY NAME IS DENTON FIXX..
...AND MY FRIEND HERE...
...WELL--
--THERE ARE A LOT OF MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HIM, TOO, SOME OF THEM COMING FROM OUTSIDE HIS HELMET...
...AND SOME COMING FROM UNDER IT.
HE CALLS HIMSELF 'MAZING MAN.
HEY!
HE THINKS HE'S A SUPER-HERO.

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LITTLE FELLA--

--DON'T PUT THAT IN YOUR *MOUTH!*

DON'T YOU KNOW THE *SURGEON GENERAL* HAS DETERMINED THAT SMOKING THESE THINGS IS *BAD* FOR YOU...?

GAAH?

HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS WHAT *EATING* ONE OF THEM MIGHT DO!

SEE WHAT I MEAN? MAZE IS HARDLY YOUR AVERAGE JOE CITIZEN.

MAAA-MEEEE!

IN FACT, THERE MAY EVEN BE SOME SPECIFIC SOCIOLOGICAL CATEGORY HE CAN BE CLASSIFIED IN.

IT WAS EASIER IN THE OLD DAYS.

THEY WOULD HAVE CALLED HIM THE VILLAGE IDIOT!

JOHNNY! HOW DID YOU GET OUT OF THAT STROLLER AGAIN?!

→MMLRFF←HELLO, MRS. SAX. I FOUND YOUNG JONATHAN OVER THERE, TRYING TO EAT A *CIGARETTE BUTT.*

!

YOU'VE SAVED THE DAY *AGAIN*, 'MAZING MAN!

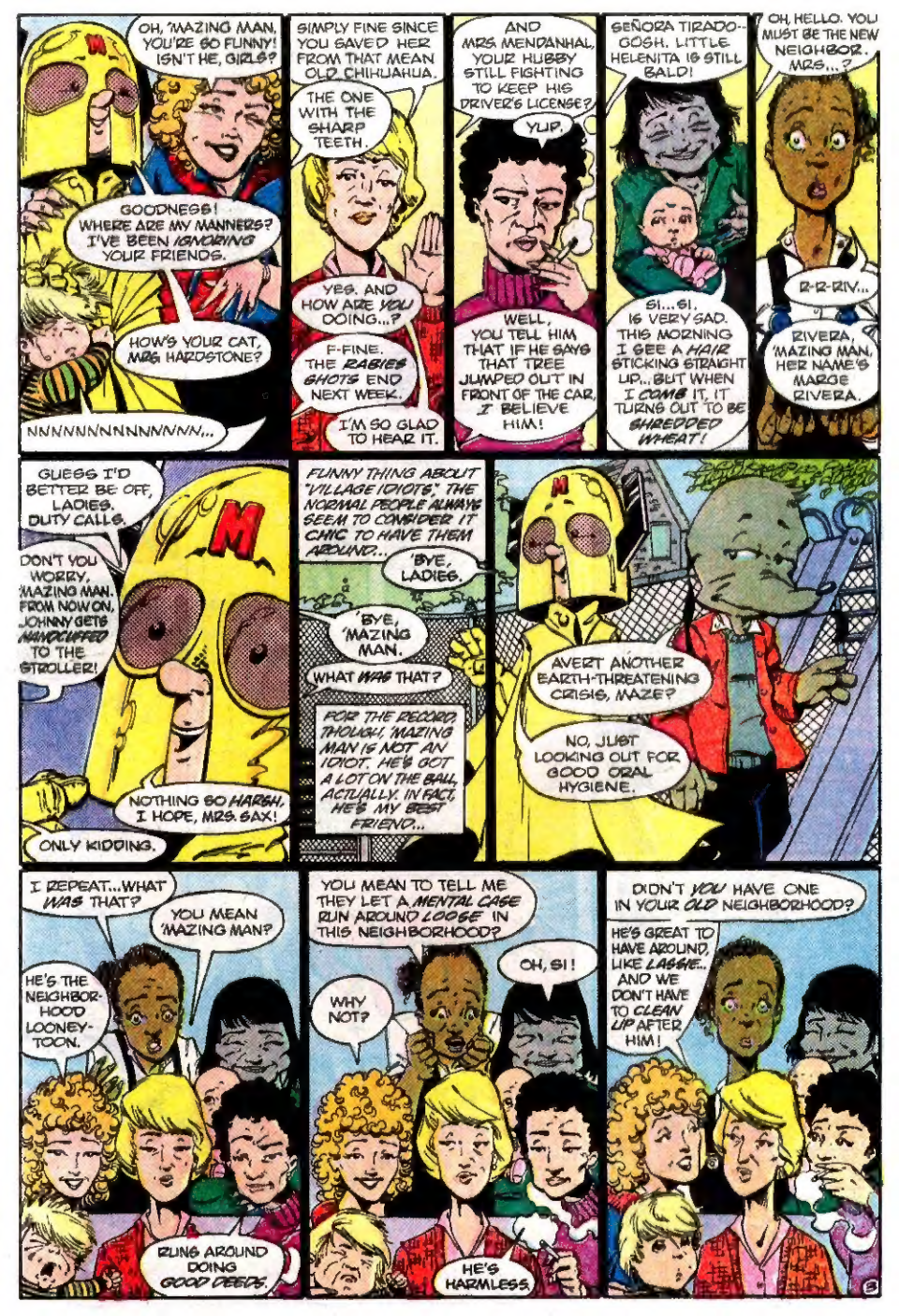
THIS KID MUST BE *HOUDINI REINCARNATED!* I DON'T KNOW *HOW* HE MANAGES TO GET OUT OF THAT STROLLER SEAT BELT ALL THE TIME. BAD BOY, JONATHAN!

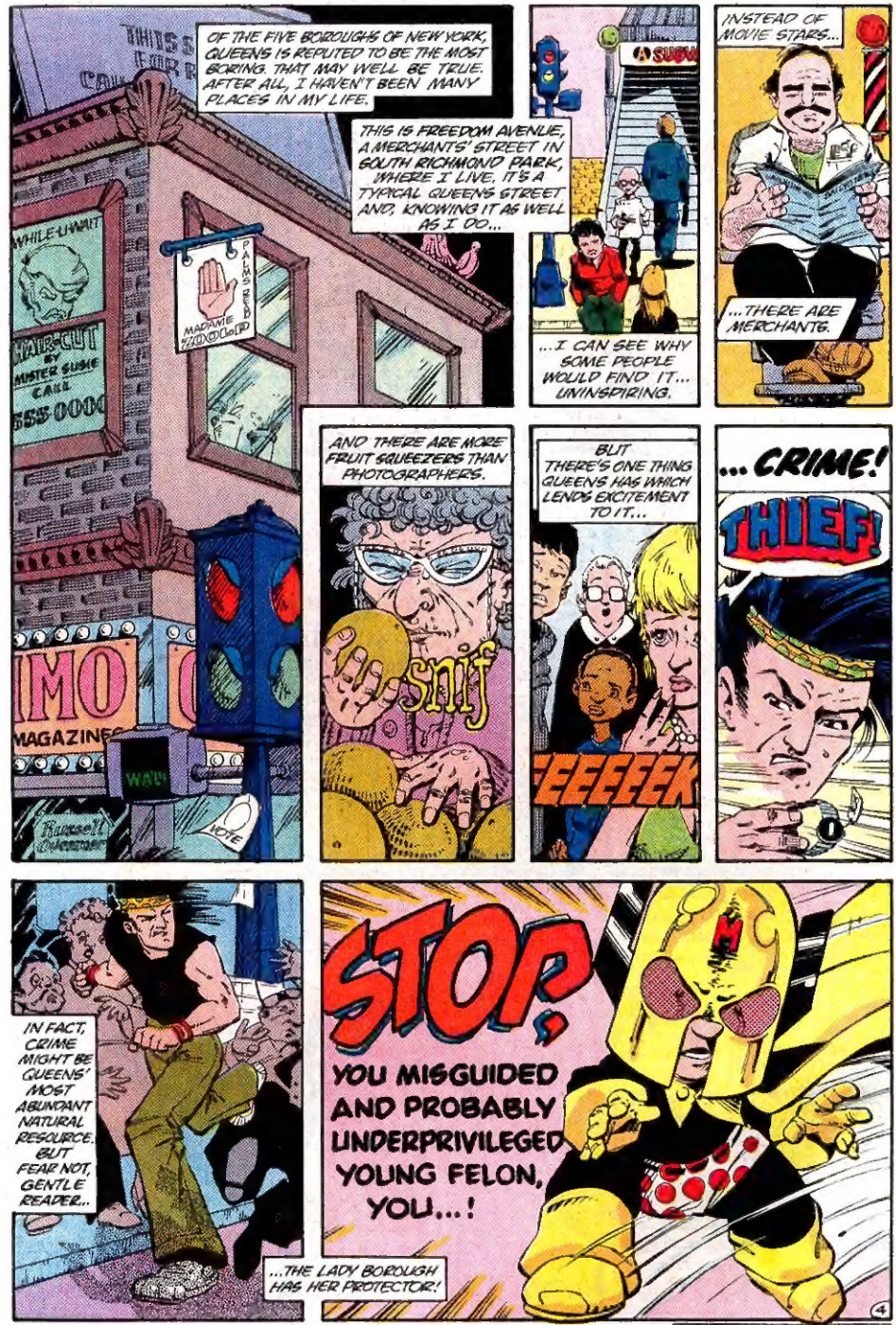
HE DIDN'T ACTUALLY PUT THE BUTT IN HIS MOUTH, MRS. SAX. JUST KIND OF LOOKED AT IT LIKE IT WAS A VELAMINT.

Pup

YAA

AA


OH, 'MAZING MAN, YOU'RE SO FUNNY! ISN'T HE, GIRLS?
GOODNESS! WHERE ARE MY MANNERS? I'VE BEEN IGNORING YOUR FRIENDS.
HOW'S YOUR CAT, MRS. HARDSTONE?
NNNNNNNNNNNNN...
SIMPLY FINE SINCE YOU SAVED HER FROM THAT MEAN OLD CHIHUAHUA.
THE ONE WITH THE SHARP TEETH.
YES. AND HOW ARE YOU DOING...?
F-FINE. THE RABIES SHOTS END NEXT WEEK.
I'M SO GLAD TO HEAR IT.
AND MRS. MENDANHAL, YOUR HUBBY STILL FIGHTING TO KEEP HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE?
YUP.
WELL, YOU TELL HIM THAT IF HE SAYS THAT TREE JUMPED OUT IN FRONT OF THE CAR, I BELIEVE HIM!
SEÑORA TIRADO-- GOSH. LITTLE HELENITA IS STILL BALD!
SI... SI, IS VERY SAD. THIS MORNING I SEE A HAIR STICKING STRAIGHT UP... BUT WHEN I COMB IT, IT TURNS OUT TO BE SHREDDED WHEAT!
OH, HELLO. YOU MUST BE THE NEW NEIGHBOR. MRS...?
R-R-RIV...
RIVERA, 'MAZING MAN. HER NAME'S MARGE RIVERA.
GUESS I'D BETTER BE OFF, LADIES. DUTY CALLS.
DON'T YOU WORRY, 'MAZING MAN. FROM NOW ON, JOHNNY GETS HANDCUFFED TO THE STROLLER!
NOTHING SO HARSH, I HOPE, MRS. SAX!
ONLY KIDDING.
FUNNY THING ABOUT "VILLAGE IDIOTS," THE NORMAL PEOPLE ALWAYS SEEM TO CONSIDER IT CHIC TO HAVE THEM AROUND...
'BYE, LADIES.
'BYE, 'MAZING MAN.
WHAT WAS THAT?
FOR THE RECORD, THOUGH, 'MAZING MAN IS NOT AN IDIOT. HE'S GOT A LOT ON THE BALL, ACTUALLY. IN FACT, HE'S MY BEST FRIEND...
AVERT ANOTHER EARTH-THREATENING CRISIS, MAZE?
NO, JUST LOOKING OUT FOR GOOD ORAL HYGIENE.
I REPEAT... WHAT WAS THAT?
YOU MEAN 'MAZING MAN?
HE'S THE NEIGHBORHOOD LOONEY-TOON.
RUNS AROUND DOING GOOD DEEDS.
YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THEY LET A MENTAL CASE RUN AROUND LOOSE IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?
OH, SI!
WHY NOT?
HE'S HARMLESS.
DION'T YOU HAVE ONE IN YOUR OLD NEIGHBORHOOD?
HE'S GREAT TO HAVE AROUND, LIKE LASSIE... AND WE DON'T HAVE TO CLEAN UP AFTER HIM!


OF THE FIVE BOROUGHS OF NEW YORK, QUEENS IS REPUTED TO BE THE MOST BORING. THAT MAY WELL BE TRUE. AFTER ALL, I HAVEN'T BEEN MANY PLACES IN MY LIFE.
THIS IS FREEDOM AVENUE, A MERCHANTS' STREET IN SOUTH RICHMOND PARK, WHERE I LIVE. IT'S A TYPICAL QUEENS STREET AND, KNOWING IT AS WELL AS I DO...
...I CAN SEE WHY SOME PEOPLE WOULD FIND IT... UNINSPIRING.
INSTEAD OF MOVIE STARS...
...THERE ARE MERCHANTS.
AND THERE ARE MORE FRUIT SQUEEZERS THAN PHOTOGRAPHERS.
snif
BUT THERE'S ONE THING QUEENS HAS WHICH LENDS EXCITEMENT TO IT...
EEEEEEK
... CRIME!
THIEF!
IN FACT, CRIME MIGHT BE QUEENS' MOST ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCE. BUT FEAR NOT, GENTLE READER...
...THE LADY BOROUGH HAS HER PROTECTOR!
STOP!
YOU MISGUIDED AND PROBABLY UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUNG FELON, YOU...!
4

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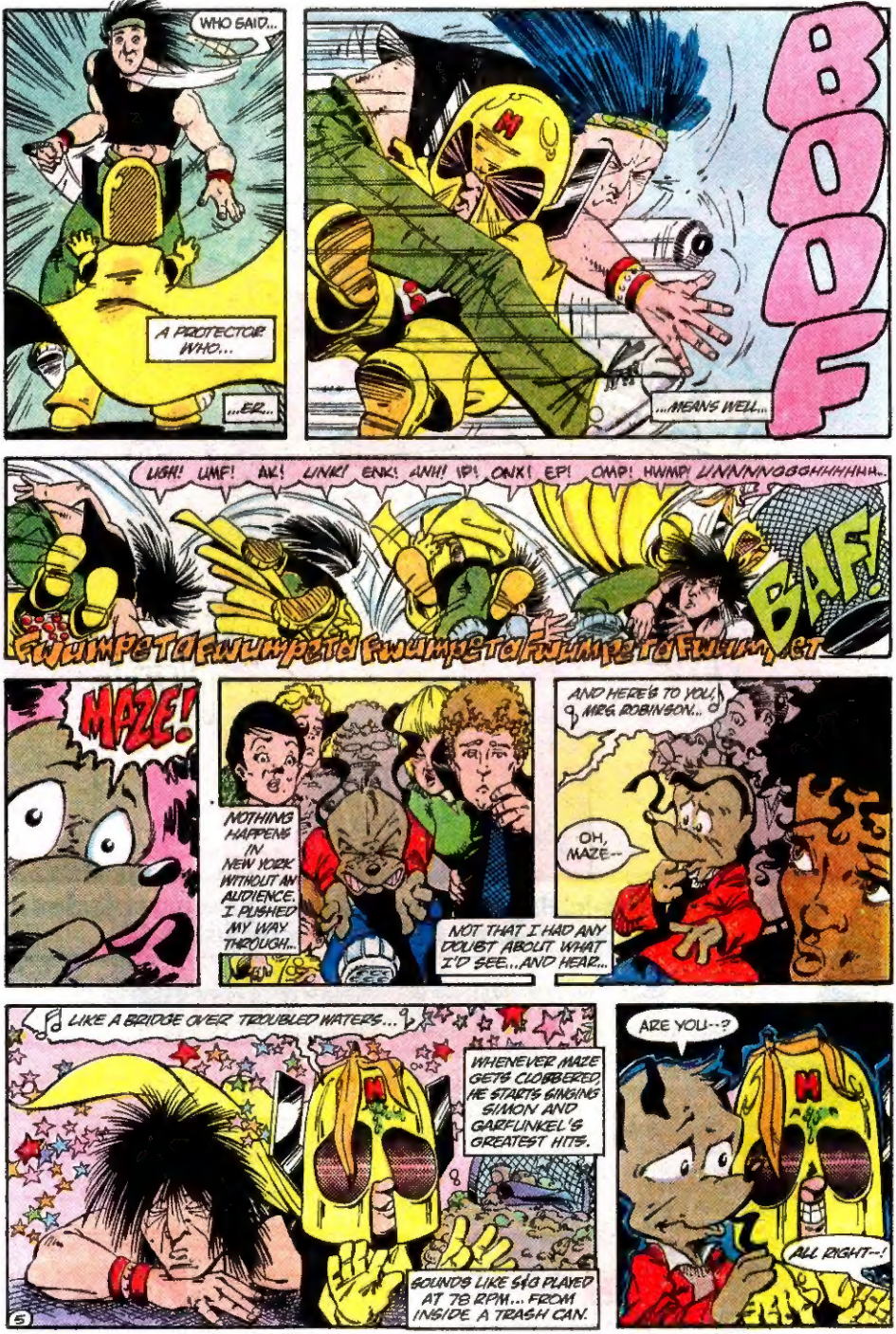
WHO SAID...
A PROTECTOR WHO...
...ER...
BOOF
...MEANS WELL...
LISH! UMF! AK! UNK! ENK! ANH! IP! ONK! EP! OMP! HWMP! UNNNNOOOOHHHHHH...
FWUMPETA FWUMPETA FWUMPETA FWUMPETA FWUMPET
BAF!
MAZE!
NOTHING HAPPENS IN NEW YORK WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE. I PUSHED MY WAY THROUGH...
NOT THAT I HAD ANY DOUBT ABOUT WHAT I'D SEE...AND HEAR...
AND HERE'S TO YOU, MRS. ROBINSON...
OH, MAZE--
LIKE A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS...
WHENEVER MAZE GETS CLOBBERED HE STARTS SINGING SIMON AND GARFUNKEL'S GREATEST HITS.
SOUNDS LIKE S&G PLAYED AT 78 RPM... FROM INSIDE A TRASH CAN.
ARE YOU--?
ALL RIGHT--!
5

DON'T WALK
--WHO DECIDED TO THROW A COSTUME PARTY WITHOUT INVITIN' ME?
A COP.
NO, NOT JUST A COP. THAT COP. SERGEANT MULDAVEY. FREEDOM AVENUE IS HIS BEAT. AND I DO MEAN HIS!
I'VE NEVER REALLY LIKED COPS. OKAY, OKAY-- I KNOW WE NEED THEM. AND LORD KNOWS I DON'T AGREE WITH WHAT MAZE IS DOING...
...IT'S JUST THAT, WELL, EVERY COP I'VE EVER KNOWN WAS SO SMUG... AT LEAST WHEN THEY'RE DEALING WITH MAZE AND ME.
I'M JUST A THIN-SKINNED DOG-FACED BOY.
AWWWLLL RIGHT, MIS-TER EE-MAZING...!
YEAH, RIGHT.
LOOK, I WANT A WORD WITH YOU.
AMAZING MAN.
CLUK
OFFICER MULDAVEY, PLEASE--
6
--THERE'S NO NEED TO THANK ME...!
THANK YOU?!
YOU! SHORTY!
SO?
YOU'RE THE HERO'S SIDEKICK, AIN'TCHA?
SO...THIS IS THE LAST TIME I'M TELLIN' YOU. ANYBODY ELSE'D BE DOTTIN' THE I'S ON A ONE-WAY PASS TO BELLVUE FOR MR. KETTLEHEAD BY NOW. BUT ME-- I'M MR. NICE GUY, I GUESS.
WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME, BARGE?

I'M SAYING -- "BATMAN" THERE OUGHTA BE KEPT INDOORS...OR CHAINED UP IN YOUR YARD, MAYBE.
HE'S A QUART SHY... MISSING SOME OF THE HARDWARE UPSTAIRS...
...THE LIGHTS ARE ON, BUT NOBODY'S HOME!
ARE YOU SAYING HE'S CRAZY, MULDAVEY?
LOOK WHO'S TALKING!
YOU'RE THE ONE CARRYING ON A CONVERSATION WITH A DOG!
GEEZ...
HE'S RIGHT!
MAYBE I CAME DOWN TOO HARD ON MULDAVEY. I DO THAT WHEN PEOPLE TALK THAT WAY ABOUT MAZE.
HEY, MAZE -- WAIT UP.
COULD BE BECAUSE I THINK THEY MAY BE... RIGHT.
THAT SERGEANT MULDAVEY! I THINK HE WANTS TO THROW A TICKER-TAPE PARADE TO HONOR ME.
TICKER-TAPE PARADE?
I'M NOT HALF AS GREAT AS HE THINKS!
MAZE--HE THINKS YOU'RE CRAZY. EVERY TIME HE SEES YOU, HE TALKS ABOUT HAVING YOU PUT AWAY.
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK, DENTON?
7

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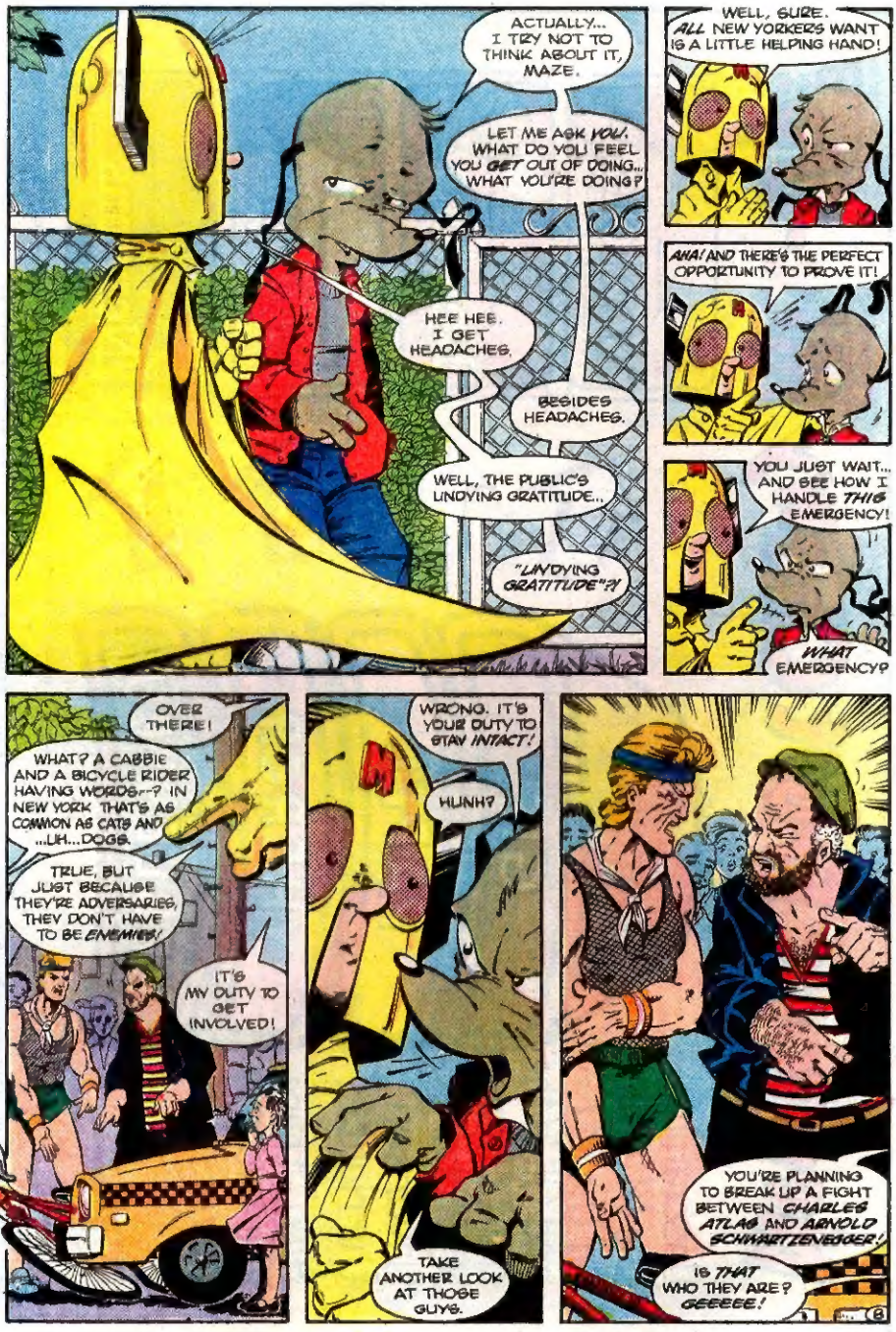
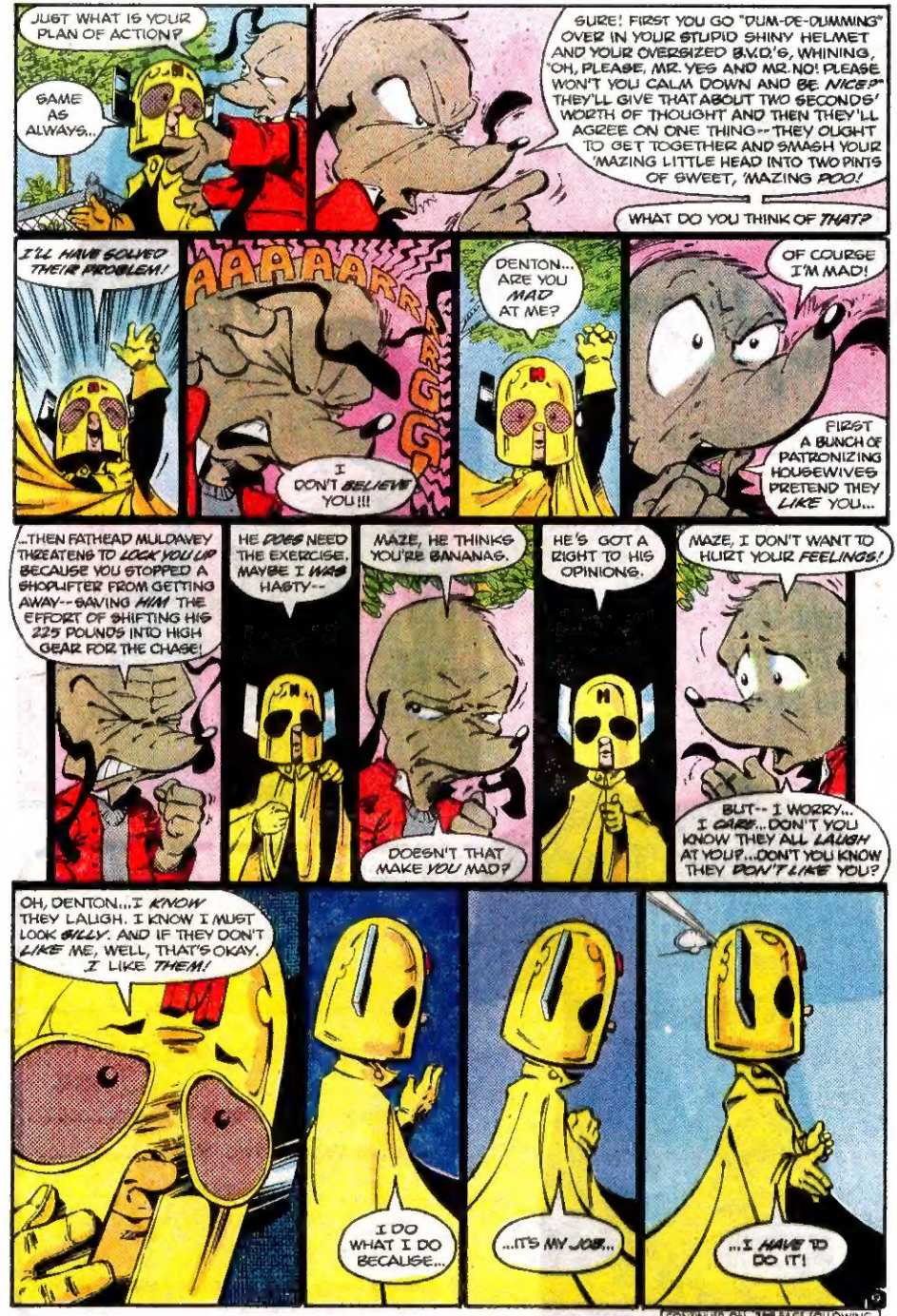

ACTUALLY... I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT, MAZE.
LET ME ASK YOU. WHAT DO YOU FEEL YOU GET OUT OF DOING... WHAT YOU'RE DOING?
HEE HEE. I GET HEADACHES.
BESIDES HEADACHES.
WELL, THE PUBLIC'S UNDYING GRATITUDE...
"UNDYING GRATITUDE"?!
WELL, SURE. ALL NEW YORKERS WANT IS A LITTLE HELPING HAND!
AHA! AND THERE'S THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE IT!
YOU JUST WAIT... AND SEE HOW I HANDLE THIS EMERGENCY!
WHAT EMERGENCY?
OVER THERE!
WHAT? A CABBIE AND A BICYCLE RIDER HAVING WORDS--? IN NEW YORK THAT'S AS COMMON AS CATS AND ...UH...DOGS.
TRUE, BUT JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE ADVERSARIES, THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE ENEMIES!
IT'S MY DUTY TO GET INVOLVED!
WRONG. IT'S YOUR DUTY TO STAY INTACT!
HUNH?
TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THOSE GUYS.
YOU'RE PLANNING TO BREAK UP A FIGHT BETWEEN CHARLES ATLAS AND ARNOLD SCHWARTZENEGGER!
IS THAT WHO THEY ARE? GEEEEE!


JUST WHAT IS YOUR PLAN OF ACTION?
SAME AS ALWAYS..
SURE! FIRST YOU GO "DUM-DE-DUMMING" OVER IN YOUR STUPID SHINY HELMET AND YOUR OVERSIZED B.V.D.'S, WHINING, "OH, PLEASE, MR. YES AND MR. NO! PLEASE WON'T YOU CALM DOWN AND BE NICE?" THEY'LL GIVE THAT ABOUT TWO SECONDS' WORTH OF THOUGHT AND THEN THEY'LL AGREE ON ONE THING-- THEY OUGHT TO GET TOGETHER AND SMASH YOUR 'MAZING LITTLE HEAD INTO TWO PINTS OF SWEET, 'MAZING POO!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?
I'LL HAVE SOLVED THEIR PROBLEM!
AAAAARRRGG!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!!!
DENTON... ARE YOU MAD AT ME?
OF COURSE I'M MAD!
FIRST A BUNCH OF PATRONIZING HOUSEWIVES PRETEND THEY LIKE YOU...
...THEN FATHEAD MULDAVEY THREATENS TO LOCK YOU UP BECAUSE YOU STOPPED A SHOPLIFTER FROM GETTING AWAY-- SAVING HIM THE EFFORT OF SHIFTING HIS 225 POUNDS INTO HIGH GEAR FOR THE CHASE!
HE DOES NEED THE EXERCISE. MAYBE I WAS HASTY--
MAZE, HE THINKS YOU'RE BANANAS.
DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU MAD?
HE'S GOT A RIGHT TO HIS OPINIONS.
MAZE, I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS!
BUT-- I WORRY... I CARE... DON'T YOU KNOW THEY ALL LAUGH AT YOU?... DON'T YOU KNOW THEY DON'T LIKE YOU?
OH, DENTON... I KNOW THEY LAUGH. I KNOW I MUST LOOK SILLY. AND IF THEY DON'T LIKE ME, WELL, THAT'S OKAY. I LIKE THEM!
I DO WHAT I DO BECAUSE...
...IT'S MY JOB...
...I HAVE TO DO IT!

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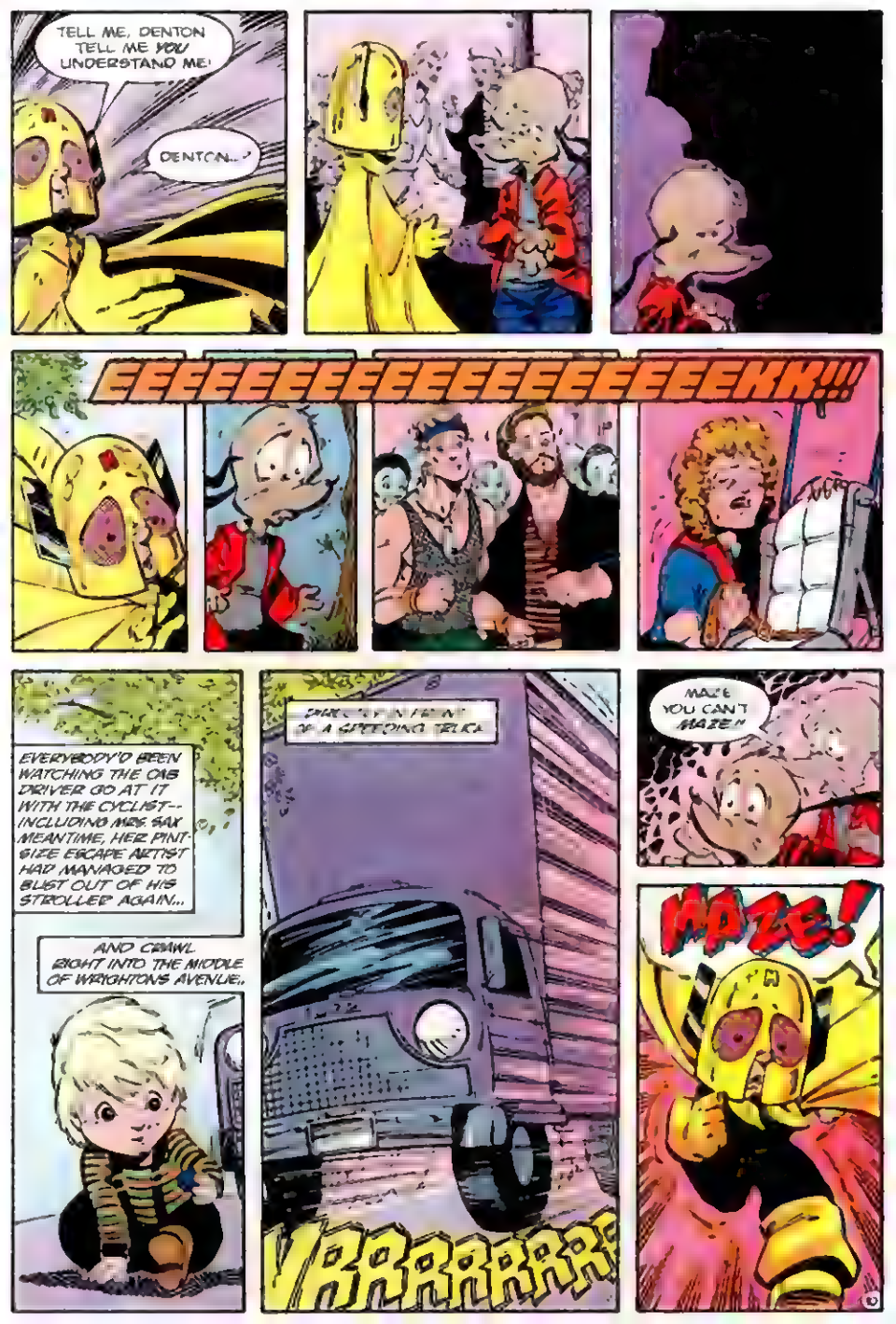
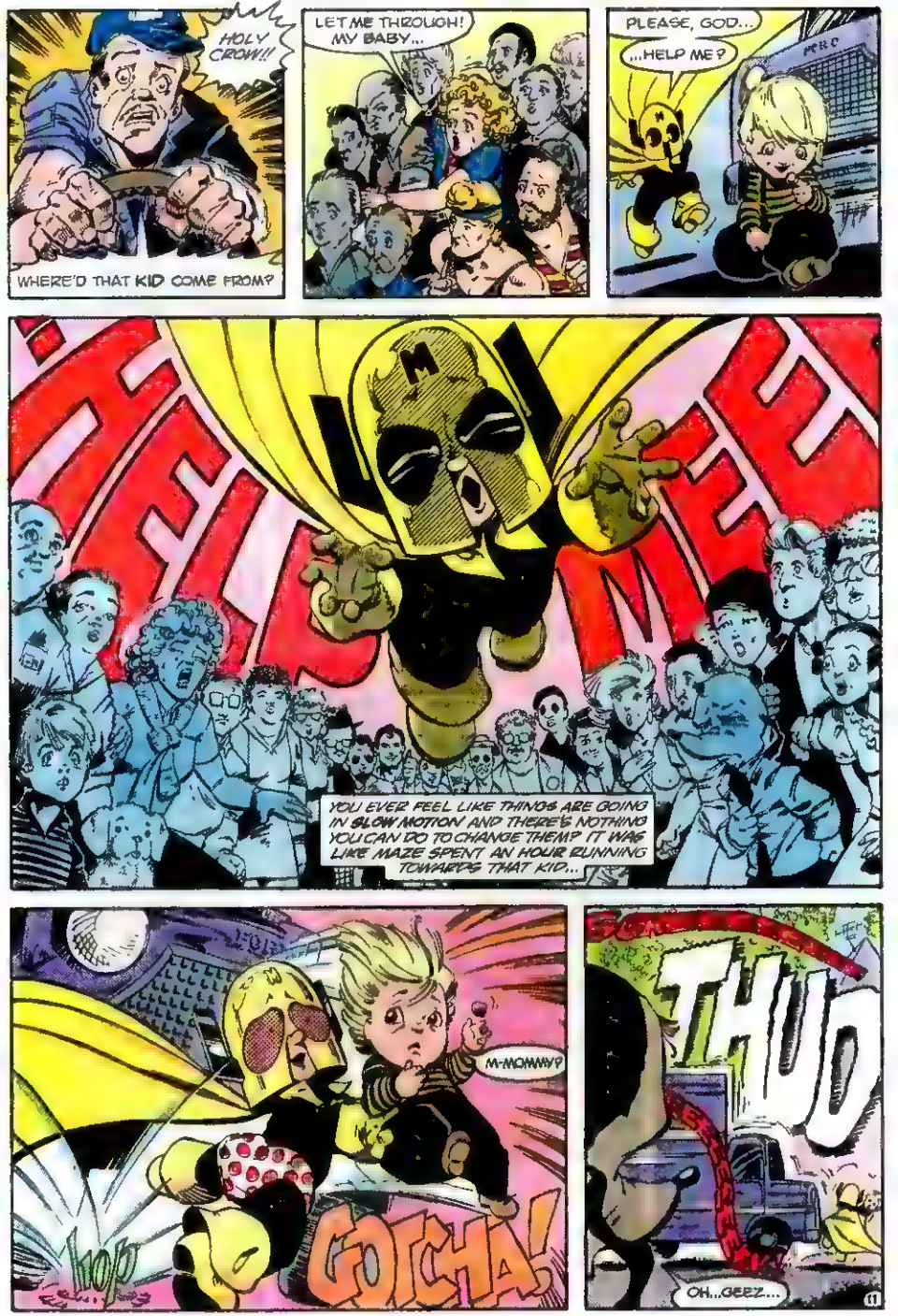
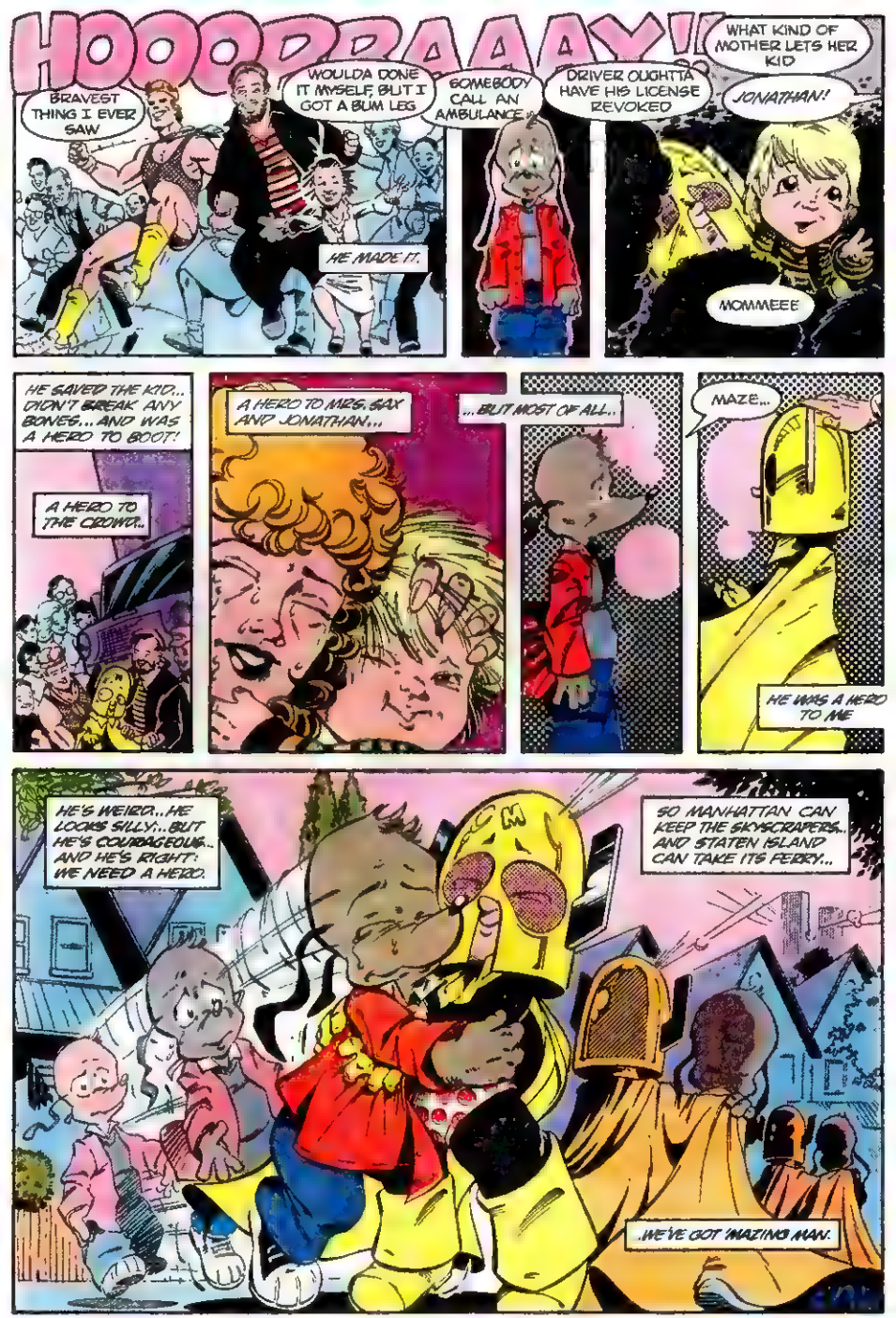

TELL ME, DENTON TELL ME YOU UNDERSTAND ME!
DENTON...?
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEKK!!!
EVERYBODY'D BEEN WATCHING THE CAB DRIVER GO AT IT WITH THE CYCLIST-- INCLUDING MIKE SAX MEANTIME, HER PINT-SIZE ESCAPE ARTIST HAD MANAGED TO BUST OUT OF HIS STROLLER AGAIN...
AND CRAWL RIGHT INTO THE MIDDLE OF WRIGHTONS AVENUE..
A SPEEDING TRUCK
VRRRRRRR
MAZE, YOU CAN'T MAZE N
MAZE!


HOLY CROW!!!
WHERE'D THAT KID COME FROM?
LET ME THROUGH! MY BABY...
PLEASE, GOD...
...HELP ME?
HELP ME!
YOU EVER FEEL LIKE THINGS ARE GOING IN SLOW MOTION AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE THEM? IT WAS LIKE MAZE SPENT AN HOUR RUNNING TOWARDS THAT KID...
M-MOMMY?
GOTCHA!
THUD
SPLAT
OH...GEEZ...
11


HOOOORAAAY!
BRAVEST THING I EVER SAW
WOULDA DONE IT MYSELF, BUT I GOT A BUM LEG
HE MADE IT.
SOMEBODY CALL AN AMBULANCE
DRIVER OUGHTTA HAVE HIS LICENSE REVOKED
WHAT KIND OF MOTHER LETS HER KID
JONATHAN!
MOMMEEE
HE SAVED THE KID.. DIDN'T BREAK ANY BONES... AND WAS A HERO TO BOOT!
A HERO TO THE CROWD..
A HERO TO MRS. SAX AND JONATHAN...
...BUT MOST OF ALL..
MAZE...
HE WAS A HERO TO ME
HE'S WEIRD...HE LOOKS SILLY...BUT HE'S COURAGEOUS.. AND HE'S RIGHT: WE NEED A HERO.
SO MANHATTAN CAN KEEP THE SKYSCRAPERS.. AND STATEN ISLAND CAN TAKE ITS FERRY...
WE'VE GOT 'MAZING MAN.

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Like many great stories, this one begins a long time ago, in an office far, far across the street.

It was 1980. Bob Rozakis was not yet the snake-eyed, two-fisted Manager of Production and Torture at DC Comics Inc. In those days he wore another plumage: that of The Answer Man of DC Comics. Fans would write him questions of eye-rolling urgency (to wit: "Can you please tell me, does the Golden Age Dr. Psycho wear gloves?") and he would respond with the straightest of faces.

Anyway, one of his correspondents was a voluble teenager from someplace called South Ozone Park, Queens, New York. His name was Stephen DeStefano. Stephen was a standout for two reasons. First, he wrote these absolutely *humendous* letters—eight two-sides pages of tight little scribble. Second, he included a super-abundance of charming, witty drawings—dozens of new characters and new costumes for established DC characters.

That's how famous friendships begin, folks. Bob started writing to Stephen. He encouraged Stephen to keep drawing. Stephen got a few of his characters into "Dial 'H' for Hero." He created "I, Baby Vampire," and he did the whole shmear as well on "Nick O'Tyme" for NEW TALENT SHOWCASE. He worked for a couple of summers, too, as a gopher at DC Comics Inc.—erasing inked pages in Production, pushing the "PRINT" button on the photocopy machine, etc. Great experience for an aspiring artist.

And he has never quit creating characters and concepts. I mean, he could have started a landfill company with his rejected concepts. One of his brainstorms focused on a four-foot-tall hero and a talking, funnybook-writing dog.

Bob took a look at kettlehead and Denton and said, "I think we *have* something here."

Perhaps Stephen smiled or at least looked less dour than usual. (Although I doubt it.)

That was about two years ago. There followed many a greasy-fingered confabulation in a local fast-food establishment as the concept was refined (for the record, in about five minutes Bob can gulp down a leg, a breast, and two wings of a chicken, along with an order of cole slaw or fries; Stephen daintily draws the line at a leg and a breast and an order of fries). Denton became a guy who just happens to look astonishingly like a dog, for example. He's got a human-looking half-sister nicknamed "K.P." 'Mazing Man (so called because he found a dome with the letter *M* soldered onto it like a kind of heraldic device: simply *'mazing*, right?) ceased being a two-dimensional boob who foiled criminals by tripping into them. Stephen discovered that he empathized with the character.

In short order, a cast of characters was created and the first story was written and drawn. They showed it to Dick Giordano. To Dick's credit let it be chalked up that he saw the merits of 'MAZING MAN right away and he told Bob and Stephen to go make up another story fast. This they did (it's the second one in this issue).

The next step was to find an editor. They may deny this in every court in the land, but the truth is, they actually requested li'l old me for their editor. Gawrsh, was I flattered! I loved what they showed me—in principle. In fact, I did tell them to redo the first story (Stephen had improved incredibly in the year since he'd penciled it), and I've made them sweat out every issue since then. I think it was worth the effort.

'MAZING MAN may not yet be the very best comic book west of the Crab Nebula, but it sure is unique. I've tried mightily to keep Bob and Stephen aimed at their original objective: a superior sit-com with a tight ensemble of players, in newsprint. We've kept the stories light for the most part, but we're not playing this series just for laughs. The characters have grown since I saw Bob and Stephen's first efforts. They continue to grow in natural, unexpected directions, and it's satisfying to see it happen—that's the last unfacetious comment you'll ever hear from *me!*

If you like what you've seen so far, please write us to let us know you love us.

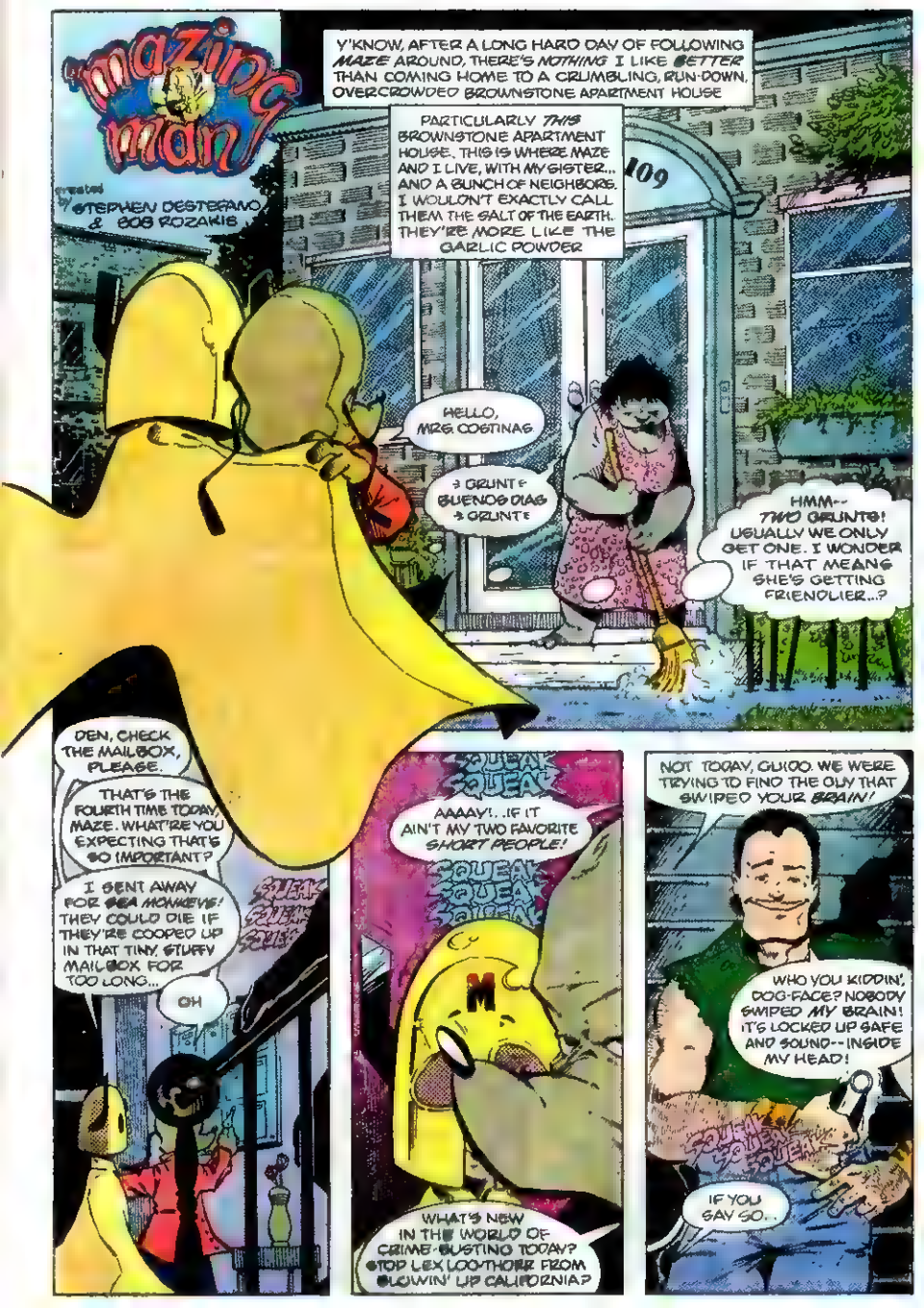
If you hate what we've done, don't let us continue inflicting our tripe on innocent readers! Write to set us straight, once and for all.

If you just feel like writing—do it! You may find your words immortalized in 'MAZING MAN #4. Could you ask for a greater reward?

NEXT MONTH: You will learn how Maze supports himself without ever doing a lick of work. You will attend a nice party in K.P.'s house; everyone will be there, and Guido will drink a little too much for his own good. You will kick yourself if you miss this one—and that's your last warning.

I'll also have a bit to say about Karl Kesel and Bob Lappan, two more of the talented guys who make me look good on this project. If there's room, I'll even print a special drawing by Stephen! See you then!

—Alan


mazing man
created by STEPHEN DESTEFANO & BOB ROZAKIS
Y'KNOW, AFTER A LONG HARD DAY OF FOLLOWING MAZE AROUND, THERE'S NOTHING I LIKE BETTER THAN COMING HOME TO A CRUMBLING, RUN-DOWN, OVERCROWDED BROWNSTONE APARTMENT HOUSE
PARTICULARLY THIS BROWNSTONE APARTMENT HOUSE. THIS IS WHERE MAZE AND I LIVE, WITH MY SISTER... AND A BUNCH OF NEIGHBORS. I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL THEM THE SALT OF THE EARTH. THEY'RE MORE LIKE THE GARLIC POWDER
109
HELLO, MRS. COSTINAS
¿GRUNT? BUENOS DIAS ¿GRUNT?
HMM-- TWO GRUNTS! USUALLY WE ONLY GET ONE. I WONDER IF THAT MEANS SHE'S GETTING FRIENDLIER...?
DEN, CHECK THE MAILBOX, PLEASE.
THAT'S THE FOURTH TIME TODAY, MAZE. WHAT'RE YOU EXPECTING THAT'S SO IMPORTANT?
I SENT AWAY FOR SEA MONKEYS! THEY COULD DIE IF THEY'RE COOPED UP IN THAT TINY, STUFFY MAILBOX FOR TOO LONG...
SQUEAK SQUEAK SQUEAK
OH
SQUEAK SQUEAK SQUEAK
AAAAY!..IF IT AIN'T MY TWO FAVORITE SHORT PEOPLE!
WHAT'S NEW IN THE WORLD OF CRIME-BUSTING TODAY? STOP LEX LOOTHOER FROM BLOWIN' UP CALIFORNIA?
NOT TODAY, GUIDO. WE WERE TRYING TO FIND THE GUY THAT SWIPED YOUR BRAIN!
WHO YOU KIDDIN', DOG-FACE? NOBODY SWIPED MY BRAIN! IT'S LOCKED UP SAFE AND SOUND--INSIDE MY HEAD!
SQUEAK SQUEAK SQUEAK
IF YOU SAY SO..

GUIDO ANTONIO GARIBALDI IS OUR DOWNSTAIRS NEIGHBOR. HE'S THE KIND OF GUY WHO THINKS CHAMPIONSHIP *GRAPE SPITTING* IS CLASSY. HE SUFFERS FROM AN INCURABLE DISEASE: *TERMINAL MACHO!* IN QUEENS, WE CALL HIM A *ZIPPERHEAD*, BUT IN SIMPLER TERMS, HE'S A *JERK*.

EITHER O' YOU HEROES WANNA GO JOGGIN' WIT' ME?

JOGGING IN THE AFTERNOON? I THOUGHT YOU WERE A CRACK-OF-*DAWN* RUNNER.

NOT ANY*MORE*. I FOUND OUT THIS IS WHEN THEY CHANGE THE MANNIKINS IN THE WINDOW OF TH' *LADIES SHOP* ON LIBERTY AVENUE... AND--

GEE-- THAT SURE IS A NEAT, UH, *THING* YOU'VE GOT THERE!

THIS? BUILDS *MUSCLE TONE*. GOTTA GET IN SHAPE... THE FOOTBALL SEASON'S COMIN', Y'KNOW.

GARIBALDI, YOU WORK IN A *SHOE STORE!*

YEAH, BUT THEM CLEATS CAN GET *REAL HEAVY*.

CAN I TRY IT, GUIDO?

SURE-- BUT DON'T *HURT* YOURSELF. THIS THING COULD BE DANGEROUS!

UNF!

I'LL MEET YOU UPSTAIRS, MAZE

UNF!

HUNH? OH... UH, ≥UMPH≤ SURE, OENTON. BE RIGH-IT ≥UNOH≤ UP ≥URGH≤

GOO'BYE, ALREADY! ME AN' MY LITTLE PAL, WE DON'T NEED--

KASPRADDING

PUK

OOH!

OOPS

SORRY...

GEE, YOU'RE RIGHT, GUIDO. IT *IS* DANGEROUS. YOU'D BETTER PUT IT AWAY BEFORE SOMEBODY GETS HURT. SEE YOU AROUND.

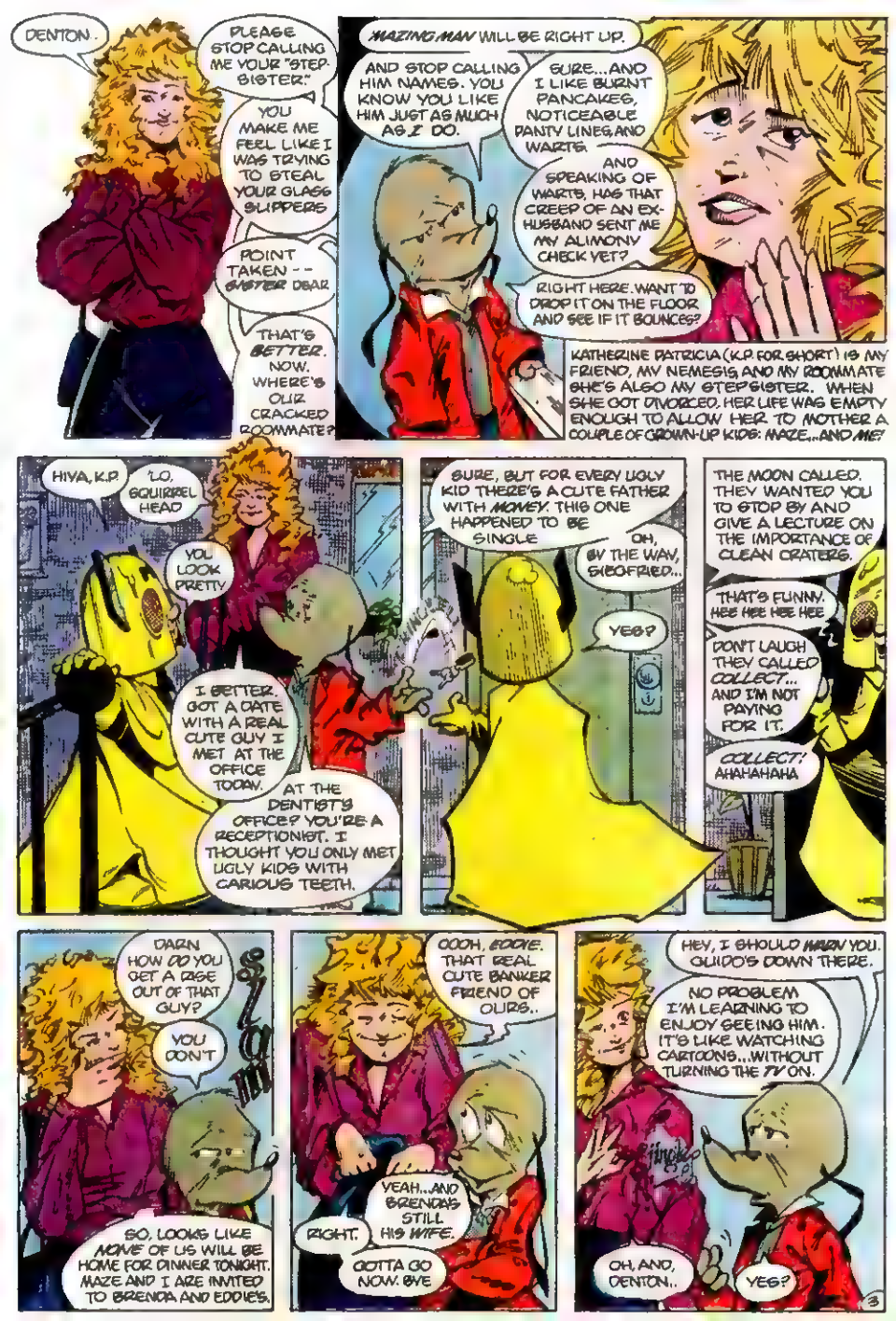
YEAH, SURE SEE YA.

TWERP!

I'M SURE THAT DESPITE WHAT HE SAYS, GUIDO REALLY *LIKES* MAZE. WE ALL NEED SOMEBODY TO FEEL SUPERIOR TO... EVEN IF WE AREN'T!

WELL, WELL, WELL-- IF IT ISN'T MY WANDERING BROTHER, HOME FROM ANOTHER DAY AT THE FUNNY FARM

HELLO, THERE, STEPSISTER OF MINE.


DENTON.
PLEASE STOP CALLING ME YOUR "STEP-SISTER."
YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE I WAS TRYING TO STEAL YOUR GLASS SLIPPERS
POINT TAKEN -- SISTER DEAR
THAT'S BETTER. NOW, WHERE'S OUR CRACKED ROOMMATE?
MAZING MAN WILL BE RIGHT UP.
AND STOP CALLING HIM NAMES. YOU KNOW YOU LIKE HIM JUST AS MUCH AS I DO.
SURE... AND I LIKE BURNT PANCAKES, NOTICEABLE PANTY LINES, AND WARTS.
AND SPEAKING OF WARTS, HAS THAT CREEP OF AN EX-HUSBAND SENT ME MY ALIMONY CHECK YET?
RIGHT HERE. WANT TO DROP IT ON THE FLOOR AND SEE IF IT BOUNCES?
KATHERINE PATRICIA (K.P. FOR SHORT) IS MY FRIEND, MY NEMESIS, AND MY ROOMMATE. SHE'S ALSO MY STEPSISTER. WHEN SHE GOT DIVORCED, HER LIFE WAS EMPTY ENOUGH TO ALLOW HER TO MOTHER A COUPLE OF GROWN-UP KIDS: MAZE... AND ME!
HIYA, K.P.
'LO, SQUIRREL HEAD
YOU LOOK PRETTY
I BETTER. GOT A DATE WITH A REAL CUTE GUY I MET AT THE OFFICE TODAY.
AT THE DENTIST'S OFFICE? YOU'RE A RECEPTIONIST. I THOUGHT YOU ONLY MET UGLY KIDS WITH CARIOUS TEETH.
SURE, BUT FOR EVERY UGLY KID THERE'S A CUTE FATHER WITH MONEY. THIS ONE HAPPENED TO BE SINGLE
OH, BY THE WAY, SIEGFRIED...
YES?
THE MOON CALLED. THEY WANTED YOU TO STOP BY AND GIVE A LECTURE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN CRATERS.
THAT'S FUNNY. HEE HEE HEE HEE
DON'T LAUGH. THEY CALLED COLLECT... AND I'M NOT PAYING FOR IT.
COLLECT! AHAHAHAHA
DARN HOW DO YOU GET A RISE OUT OF THAT GUY?
YOU DON'T
SIGH
SO, LOOKS LIKE NONE OF US WILL BE HOME FOR DINNER TONIGHT. MAZE AND I ARE INVITED TO BRENDA AND EDDIES.
OOOH, EDDIE. THAT REAL CUTE BANKER FRIEND OF OURS..
YEAH... AND BRENDA'S STILL HIS WIFE.
RIGHT.
GOTTA GO NOW. BYE
HEY, I SHOULD WARN YOU. GUIDO'S DOWN THERE.
NO PROBLEM. I'M LEARNING TO ENJOY SEEING HIM. IT'S LIKE WATCHING CARTOONS... WITHOUT TURNING THE TV ON.
OH, AND, DENTON..
YES?
3

SAY "HI" TO THAT CUTIE FOR ME.
AND TO BRENDA ALSO.
I MAY NOT BE THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITY ON "CUTIES" BUT I DO KNOW THAT EDDIE VALENTINE IS A GOOD-LOOKING GUY. IT'S NO WONDER HE'S GOT A GIRL AS BEAUTIFUL AS BRENDA. AND I WAS THERE WHEN IT ALL BEGAN. WHEN SHE WAS A BRIGHT AND WITTY CHEERLEADER AND HE WAS THE BEST CENTER-FIELDER IN THE HISTORY OF JOHN QUINCY HIGH. IT HAD TO HAPPEN. IT WAS FATE!
AND WHAT'S REALLY AMAZING ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS ITS LONGEVITY. THEY WERE EACH OTHER'S FIRST LOVE...
...THEY WERE MARRIED WHEN THEY WERE QUITE YOUNG...
...AND AFTER ALL THE GROWING UP THEY DID TOGETHER, THEY'RE STILL THE MOST VIBRANT COUPLE IN QUEENS.
THEY'VE GOT EVERYTHING--YOUTH, LOOKS, GOOD JOBS, ROMANCE... EVERYTHING!
SURE, THEY HAVE THEIR LITTLE SPATS, BUT EVERY COUPLE DOES. STILL, I TRULY BELIEVE..
...THEY'RE THE MOST HAPPILY MARRIED COUPLE IN THE WORLD.
I HAVE TO COOK WHAT FOR WHAT?

I SAID DENTON AND UH AMAZING MAN ARE COMING OVER FOR DINNER AND.. YOU'VE GOT TO COOK IT.
WELL, I'M SURE GLAD YOU DECIDED TO TELL ME
I FORGOT
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO HELP? YOU SCREW UP AND ALL YOU CAN SAY IS "I FORGOT"?!
WHAT'RE YOU GETTING SO UPSET FOR? I SAID I WAS SORRY
SERENA I'M SORRY
OH YOU'RE SORRY!
THAT MAKES IT ALL BETTER RIGHT?
WRONG!
WUMP!
DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN HOME FOR AN HOUR ALREADY, YOU COULD HAVE COOKED? YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WORKS, YOU KNOW.
IT WASN'T MY TURN
GIVE ME A BREAK!
HEY, THIS "TURNS" BUSINESS WAS YOUR IDEA
YEAH, BECAUSE I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THE NIGHT YOU SPEND HOURS MAKING A BEAUTIFUL DINNER AND I HAVE TO WORK LATE
THAT ONLY HAPPENED ONCE! I WAS NEW ON THE JOB AND THE BOSS ASKED ME TO STAY I CALLED YOU, REMEMBER?
YEAH, YOU CALLED ME
SO? WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
IT WAS OUR ANNIVERSARY, YOU CLOD!
OH YEAH
"OH YEAH," HE SAYS
HEY COME ON! I MADE IT UP TO YOU I TOOK YOU OUT TO THAT LOVELY RESTAURANT.
SURE, THAT WAS A WONDERFUL EVENING ESPECIALLY THE SEXY PART WHERE YOU HAD TO PERFORM THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER ON ME
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD THE CHICKEN
DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT CHICKENS--
--IF YOU DON'T CALL DENTON UP AND TELL HIM DINNER'S OFF I'LL CARVE YOU LIKE A CORNISH GAME HEN
I CAN'T DO THAT--

..DENTON'S OUR FRIEND
BUT THAT'S EXACTLY THE POINT.
DENTON IS OUR FRIEND. HE'LL UNDERSTAND THAT I'VE HAD A HARD DAY AT WORK...AND THAT YOU'RE A TOTAL JERK FOR INVITING THEM WITHOUT TELLING ME. I KNOW HE'LL UNDERSTAND--
..AND IF HE DOESN'T..
...I'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL HIM
YOU'RE SUCH A LADY
THANK YOU
YOU'RE TALKING AS IF YOU DON'T LIKE HAVING DENTON AND MAZE AROUND
DON'T BE STUPID
I LOVE DENTON LIKE A BROTHER
I'M EVEN FOND OF MAZE. I'D RATHER HAVE HIM AROUND THAN ANY SMURF I KNOW!
I DON'T SEE WHY I SHOULD HAVE TO COOK DINNER FOR A 4-FOOT LUNATIC WHO KEEPS ASKING IF WE'VE GOT "BIG BIRD GOES TO CHINA" ON OUR VCR.
OH, WELL.
..THERE'S NO ANSWER.
I SUPPOSE I DO HAVE TO COOK DINNER TONIGHT
AW, BRENDA.
...THANKS
SURE--
--BUT JUST TELL ME ONE THING...
WHAT'S THAT?
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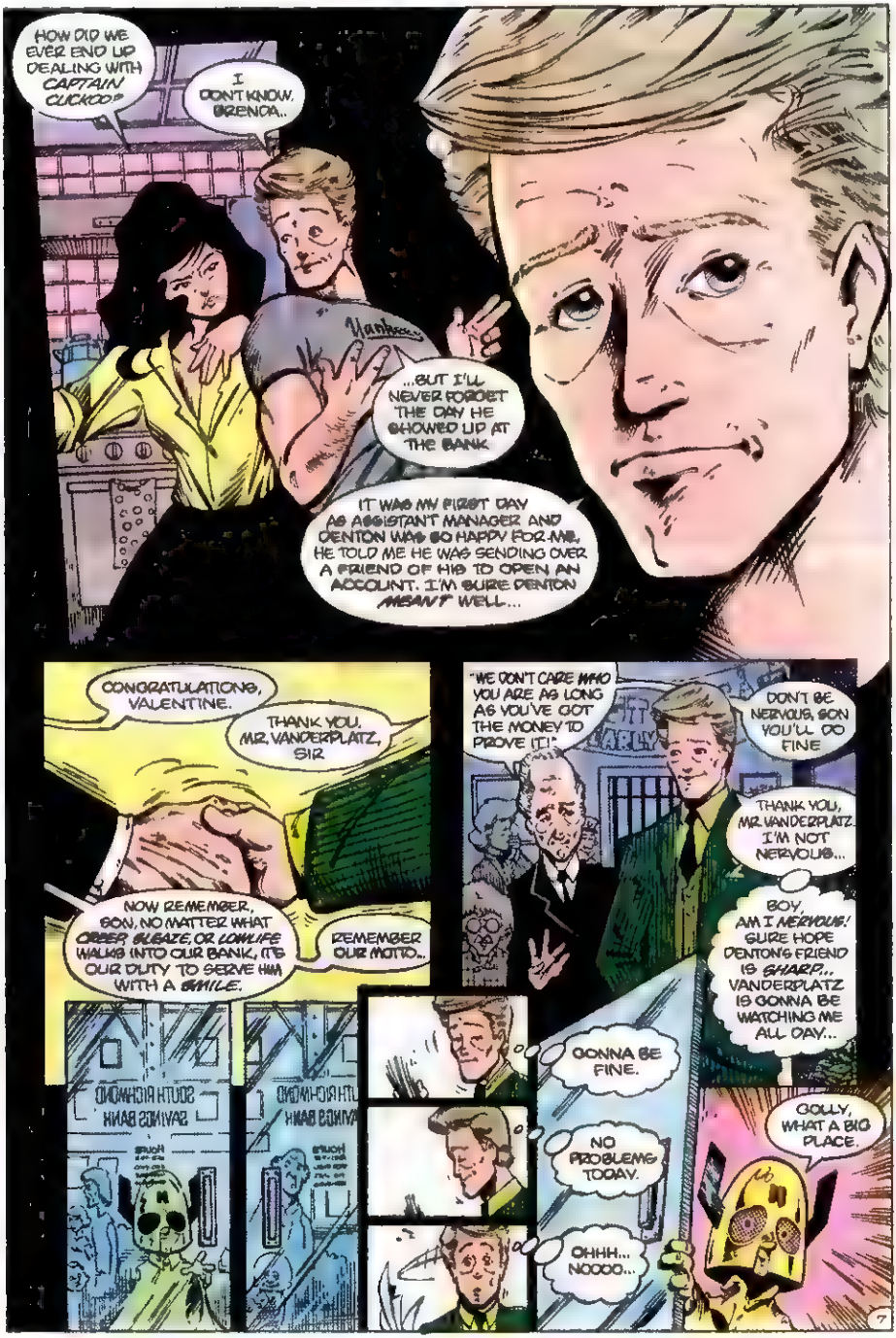

HOW DID WE EVER END UP DEALING WITH CAPTAIN CUCKOO?
I DON'T KNOW, BRENDA..
...BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET THE DAY HE SHOWED UP AT THE BANK.
IT WAS MY FIRST DAY AS ASSISTANT MANAGER AND DENTON WAS SO HAPPY FOR ME, HE TOLD ME HE WAS SENDING OVER A FRIEND OF HIS TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT. I'M SURE DENTON MEANT WELL...
CONGRATULATIONS, VALENTINE.
THANK YOU, MR. VANDERPLATZ, SIR
NOW REMEMBER, SON, NO MATTER WHAT CREEP, SLEAZE, OR LOWLIFE WALKS INTO OUR BANK, IT'S OUR DUTY TO SERVE HIM WITH A SMILE.
REMEMBER OUR MOTTO..
"WE DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE AS LONG AS YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY TO PROVE IT!"
DON'T BE NERVOUS, SON YOU'LL DO FINE
THANK YOU, MR. VANDERPLATZ. I'M NOT NERVOUS...
BOY, AM I NERVOUS! SURE HOPE DENTON'S FRIEND IS SHARP... VANDERPLATZ IS GONNA BE WATCHING ME ALL DAY...
GONNA BE FINE.
NO PROBLEMS TODAY.
OHHH... NOOOO...
GOLLY, WHAT A BIG PLACE.
SOUTH RICHMOND SAVINGS BANK

South Richmond Savings
NO
PLEASE, NO.
NO PLEASE.
PLEASE...
...DON'T LET IT BE...
...HIM!
MR. VALENTINE... DENTON TOLD ME TO SEE YOU.
WELL, HELLO THERE!
WON'T YOU HAVE A SEAT, MR.--UH--MR..
AMAZING MAN!
SCCCCC
SCCCCC HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN DENTON--?
OH--FOR A WHILE
I MET HIM IN THE HOSPITAL
HE USED TO BE A NIGHT WATCHMAN, Y'KNOW
MM-HMM. YES HE WAS DOING THAT TO EARN SOME EXTRA MONEY. WHERE EXACTLY DID YOU MEET HIM--?

...TO BE CONTINUED IN THE 2ND PART FOLLOWING

GEE, WHAT WAS IT THEY CALLED IT?

OH, YES--THE *PSYCHIATRIC WARD.*

OH, LORD.

UH, IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT HERE, SIR?

I THINK IT WAS ON A COUCH SOMEWHERE.

PEACHY. *JUST* PEACHY.

CREEK

ANYWAY, I'D LIKE TO OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT, PLEASE.

I'M GONNA BE *SICK.*

MIS-TER VALENTINE.

YEAH? WHAT--??

=HARUMPH= DO YOU HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL HERE, VALENTINE?

MR. VANDERPLATZ!!

ARE YOU GIVING THIS GENTLEMAN YOUR *FULL* ATTENTION, VALENTINE?

OH, YES, SIR. *YESSIR!*

SIR?

MR. VALENTINE IS DOING *WONDERFULLY.*

ARE YOU BY CHANCE A *FRIEND* OF MR. VALENTINE'S?

NO. PLEASE SAY NO.

OH, NO..

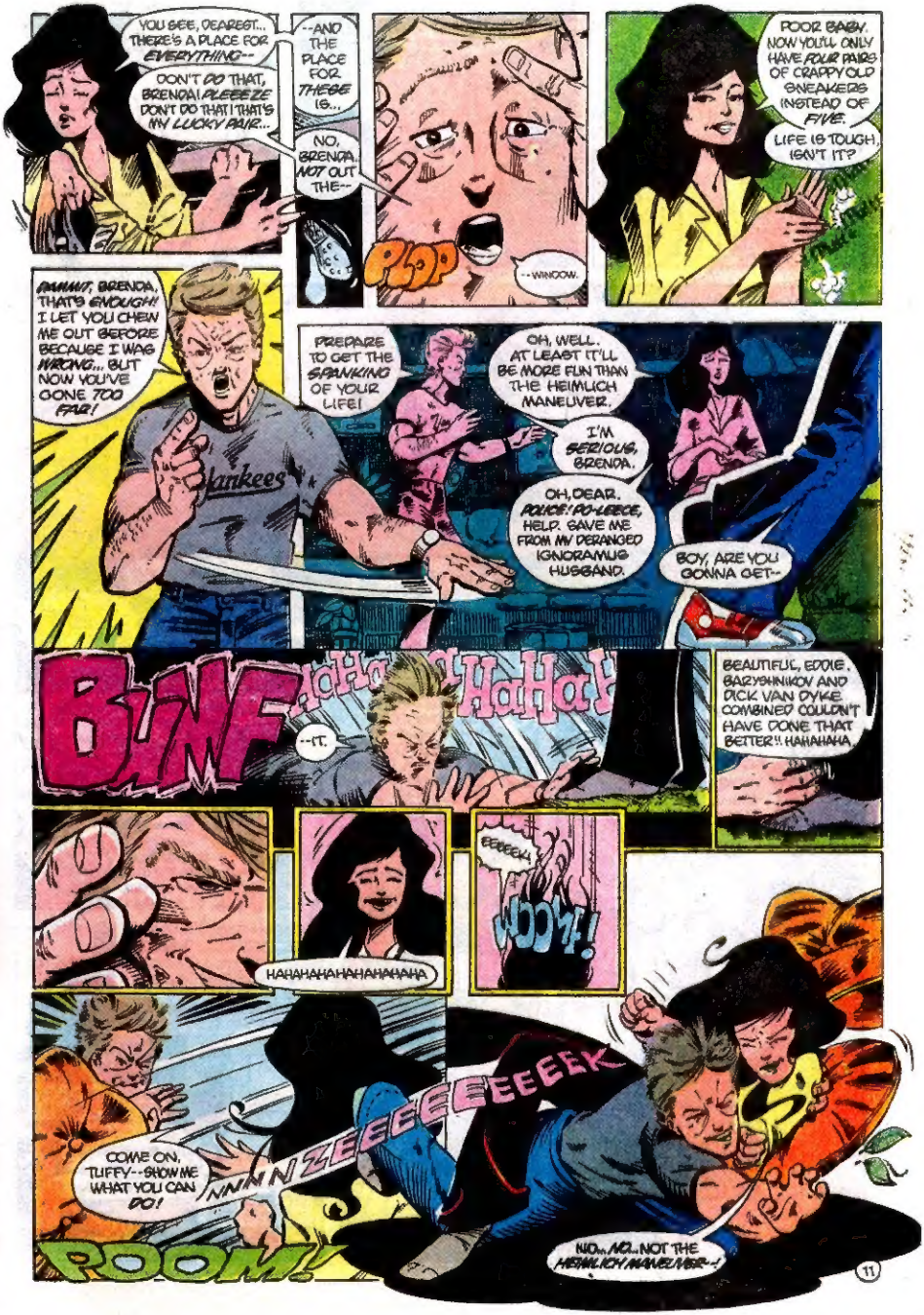
THANK YOU, LORD.

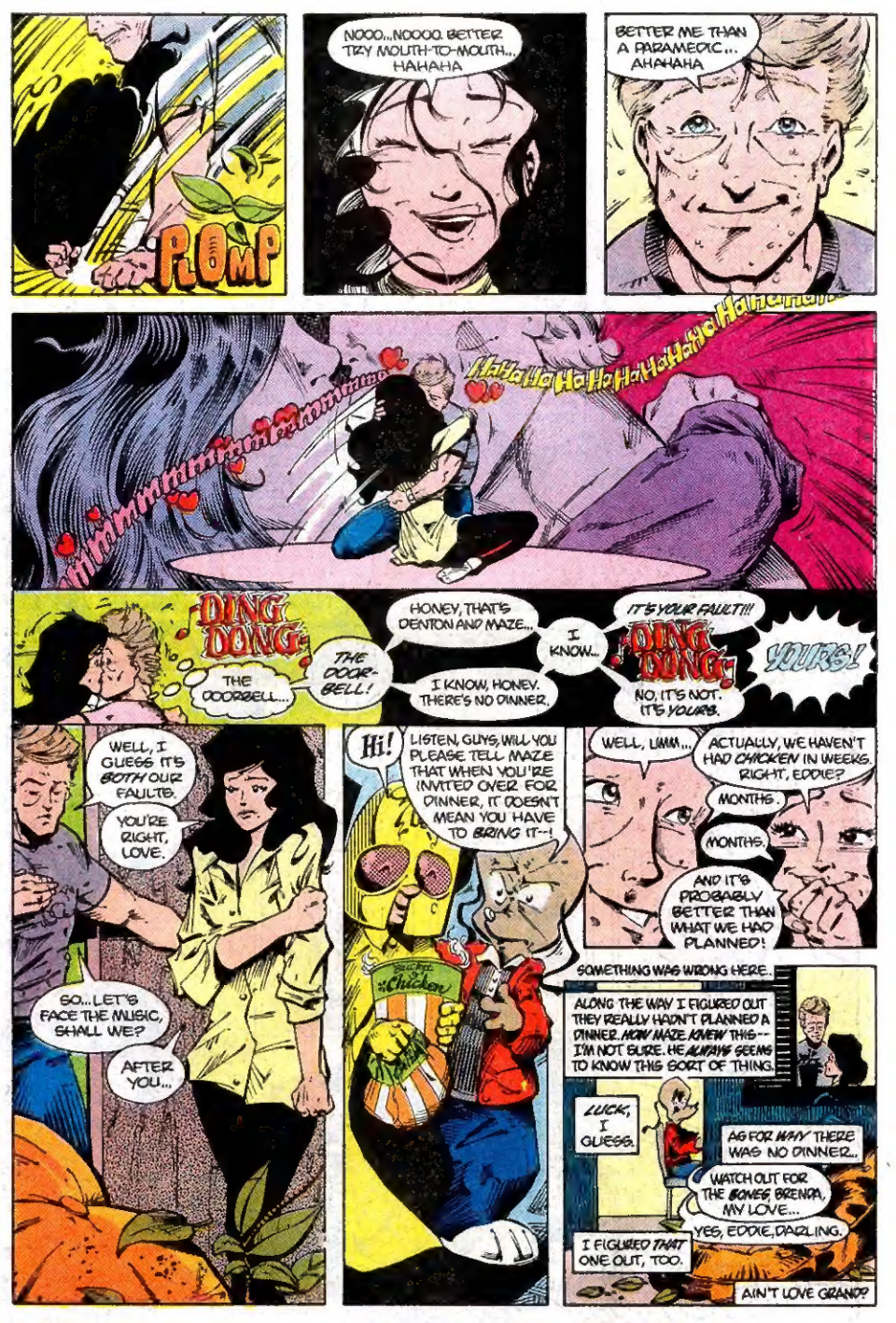
...NOT *YET.* ACTUALLY, I'M A FRIEND OF A FRIEND.

6 TO 1 ODDS VALENTINE GETS CANNED.

YOU'RE ON.

BUT I EXPECT WE'LL BE REAL BALS PRETTY SOON.
I'M HERE TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT... AND DO ALL MY BANKING HERE.
WELL--
CONGRATULATIONS, MY BOY.
AND IF I MAY SAY SO...
...YOU'VE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN DEALING WITH OUR BANK.
BACK TO WORK, VALENT!!!NNN!
FWUNK!
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HELP, MR. VANDERPLATZ?
SIR?
HHMMPH!
HMMPH!
AHEM. EXCUSE ME, BEAUTIFUL DREAMER, BUT WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT THESE ARE?
WELL, BRENDA, WHERE I COME FROM THEY CALL THEM SNEAKERS.
NO.
NO, YOU'RE WRONG.
THESE ARE GARBAGE.
NOW--CAN YOU TELL ME WHY THIS GARBAGE WAS IN THE SINK?
THEY WERE DIRTY. I TRIED TO GET SOME GUNK OFF THEM.
SO YOU PUT THEM IN THE KITCHEN SINK.
EDDIE, MY LOVE, AS YOU GROW OLDER YOU WILL LEARN THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT DO NOT GO IN THE KITCHEN SINK.
THINGS LIKE SPARK PLUGS, SMALL ANIMALS.. AND DIRTY, GUNKY, OLD SNEAKERS!


YOU SEE, DEAREST... THERE'S A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING--
--AND THE PLACE FOR THESE IS...
DON'T DO THAT, BRENDA! PLEEEZE DON'T DO THAT! THAT'S MY LUCKY PAIR...
NO, BRENDA, NOT OUT THE--
POOR BABY. NOW YOU'LL ONLY HAVE FOUR PAIRS OF CRAPPY OLD SNEAKERS INSTEAD OF FIVE.
LIFE IS TOUGH, ISN'T IT?
PLOP
--WINDOW.
AHHHH, BRENDA, THAT'S ENOUGH! I LET YOU CHEW ME OUT BEFORE BECAUSE I WAS WRONG... BUT NOW YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR!
PREPARE TO GET THE SPANKING OF YOUR LIFE!
OH, WELL. AT LEAST IT'LL BE MORE FUN THAN THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER.
I'M SERIOUS, BRENDA.
OH, DEAR. POLICE! PO-LEECE, HELP. SAVE ME FROM MY DERANGED IGNORAMUS HUSBAND.
BOY, ARE YOU GONNA GET--
BUNF
--IT.
BEAUTIFUL, EDDIE. BARYSHNIKOV AND DICK VAN DYKE COMBINED COULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT BETTER!! HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
EEEEEK
WOOM!
COME ON, TUFFY--SHOW ME WHAT YOU CAN DO!
NNNNSEEEEEEEEEEEK
ROOM!
NO... NO... NOT THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER--!


POMP
NOOO...NOOOO. BETTER TRY MOUTH-TO-MOUTH... HAHAHA
BETTER ME THAN A PARAMEDIC... AHAHAHA
HaHaHa HaHaHaHaHaHaHaHaHa
DING DONG!
THE DOORBELL...
THE DOOR-BELL!
HONEY, THAT'S DENTON AND MAZE...
I KNOW, HONEY. THERE'S NO DINNER.
I KNOW...
IT'S YOUR FAULT!!!
DING DONG!
NO, IT'S NOT. IT'S YOURS.
YOURS!
WELL, I GUESS IT'S BOTH OUR FAULTS.
YOU'RE RIGHT, LOVE.
SO... LET'S FACE THE MUSIC, SHALL WE?
AFTER YOU...
Hi!
LISTEN, GUYS, WILL YOU PLEASE TELL MAZE THAT WHEN YOU'RE INVITED OVER FOR DINNER, IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO BRING IT--!
Chicken
WELL, UMM...
ACTUALLY, WE HAVEN'T HAD CHICKEN IN WEEKS. RIGHT, EDDIE?
MONTHS.
MONTHS.
AND IT'S PROBABLY BETTER THAN WHAT WE HAD PLANNED!
SOMETHING WAS WRONG HERE...
ALONG THE WAY I FIGURED OUT THEY REALLY HADN'T PLANNED A DINNER. NOW MAZE KNEW THIS-- I'M NOT SURE. HE ALWAYS SEEMS TO KNOW THIS SORT OF THING.
LUCK, I GUESS.
AS FOR WHY THERE WAS NO DINNER...
WATCH OUT FOR THE BONES BRENDA, MY LOVE...
YES, EDDIE, DARLING.
I FIGURED THAT ONE OUT, TOO.
AIN'T LOVE GRAND?